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of Malacca are about 500 miles long and about 300 miles wide at the broadest part. There are no storms: there are variable winds and squalls, called "Sumatras," because they always blow from the coast of Sumatra, which last about a couple of hours. The Peninsular and Oriental Company have been carrying the mails by this route for the last eighteen years. During that period their ships have made between 600 and 700 voyages through the straits, and have met with only one accident, which was caused by two of their ships running against each other in the dark, when one of them went to the bottom. The merchants of Calcutta and Bombay send their opium to China by this route, and out of 300 voyages made by their steamers not a single loss has occurred. Steamers belonging to the Royal Navy are constantly passing and repassing through the straits of Malacca, and he had never heard of one of them being lost. For the last ten years also the Dutch Government have been sending a vessel once a fortnight, and during the whole of that time have never lost a vessel. He, therefore, took it for granted that the navigation of the straits was not so dangerous as had been alleged.

CAPTAIN ANDERSON said he visited Siam in 1826, when he heard of a tradition among the natives that there had been originally a canal across the isthmus of Kraw. He agreed with Mr. Crawford that the line of country was not suitable for a railway, though it might be for a light road.

With respect to the straits of Malacca, he could speak from experience that the navigation, though dangerous to a certain extent, was not dangerous so far as the harbours were concerned. He had navigated the straits thirty-seven times, and had never met with an accident.

The shortening of the passage to China by the proposed route might be very desirable for the trade of Bengal, but it was not an object of national importance. He believed there were better means of getting to China. One was a proposal by Captain Spry to go overland from Eastern Pegu to Hong-Kong, to make a tramroad part of the way, and to take the telegraph the whole way. He had also himself submitted a project to Government to open a communication with China by the Irrawaddy and Assam, which he believed would be the best route.

The PRESIDENT thought Mr. Crawford and Captain Anderson had given sufficient reasons for not advocating this project. The gentlemen, however, who had made this exploration had placed before the Society for the first time a map of the physical geography of a region which was before unknown, and for this they were well entitled to their thanks.

The second Paper read was—

2. *Visit to the Island of Tsusima, near Japan.* By LAURENCE
OLIPHANT, ESQ., F.R.G.S.

THE Island of Tsusima, which forms one of the entrances to the Inland Sea of Japan, lies eighty miles to the westward of the Straits of Simonesaki. Mr. Oliphant's duties led him at once to its capital, Fatchio, a town of 10,000 inhabitants, where he spent an evening in a diplomatic interview, but was jealously restricted in his movements. A subsequent cruise round its coasts afforded materials for many interesting observations. The whole island is the private property of its Prince, who maintains a garrison of 300

men at Chusan, on the Corean coast, and is bound to the Government of that country and to Japan by relations that are still insufficiently understood. He enjoys a monopoly of the trade with Corea, which furnishes a large proportion of the gold in currency in Japan. The formation of Tsusima is volcanic. It is about 35 miles long by 8 or 10 broad, and its total population is 30,000. It is bisected by a fiord of water running into innumerable creeks of great and sudden depth, where all the navies of the world might lie concealed, and even moored to the trees. The shores of these lanes of water, which invited an exploration that Mr. Oliphant had no leisure to give, are thinly inhabited by fishermen. A virgin forest clothes the hills to their summits, 1670 feet above the sea-level. The fauna of Tsusima are said to resemble those of the Manchurian coast rather than the fauna of the islands of Japan.

The PRESIDENT congratulated the country on possessing diplomatists such as Mr. Oliphant, who had given so lucid an account of a territory which was quite new to us. When he visited these islands he was still suffering from the wounds he had received in the performance of his duties in Japan.

SIR RUTHERFORD ALCOCK said Tsusima was an object of some interest to him when he was in Japan, and also to the Government, because they had reason to know that the Russians had for some time been there with their ships, and had made it a sort of careening port where they made extensive repairs. This attracted the attention of Government, who were anxious to know what was the special attraction at Tsusima, and whether it was an advantage that could be fairly shared by other nations. The reports of Mr. Oliphant and others fully convinced him that if we were in search of a magnificent harbour in these seas, which could be made defensible against attack and be a place of resort for fleets in distress, there was no place which could be chosen with so much advantage. The Russians seemed to find it a very pleasant place; but he believed they had since quitted it and left it to its original proprietors.

He saw some charts on the table which would amply repay inspection, and for which the Society was indebted to that most enterprising geographer, Lady Franklin. If ladies were eligible to be Fellows of the Royal Geographical Society, he thought that lady ought to be elected by acclamation. He had the pleasure of receiving Lady Franklin in Japan on her way home to England on her return from America. These maps which she had brought home were chiefly interesting from the evidence they afforded of the progress which the Japanese had made in trigonometry and topography. One was a plan of Jeddo, a city as large as London, 20 miles in circumference: it was most elaborately laid down, and he knew from practical experience that it was exceedingly accurate. Again, when Captain Ward, of the *Actæon*, was making a survey of a portion of the coast, certain surveys were produced by the Japanese Government to show what they had done themselves. Captain Ward was so astonished at the perfect accuracy of the lines, that he immediately put back in order to obtain copies of these surveys, which were ultimately given. These charts enabled Captain Ward to abridge his labours very much, for by whatever means they had been constructed, he found that they could be entirely relied upon. He did not think the natives made them by our method, and if not, they afforded an idea of the astonishing skill, ingenuity, and perseverance of these people.

From what he had seen of the Japanese, he had great hopes of them, if we could only get over one great difficulty that lay as a stumbling-block in our

path, and that was the existence of a rampant feudalism, such as that which flourished in Europe in former times. The mass of the people had attained a degree of material civilisation which rivalled our own in many respects. They have order and law established among themselves; they have a most elaborate system of mutual responsibility. In arts and manufactures they rival Birmingham, Manchester, and Lyons in many of their products: and yet side by side with all this material civilisation there is a military class of feudal nobles who exercise great power and influence; and it is this which constitutes the great difficulty in the way of all foreign nations who have entered into political and commercial relations with them.

The largest of the islands they call Nipon. Japan is a name not used by the Japanese themselves. The name is derived from two words, juh and pun, "the day-dawn or place of the sun." The Dutch when they came wrote it Jipan, but J they pronounced as our Y. The Japanese have softened the sound, for they speak the softest language out of Italy, and they have turned the J into N. The natives in speaking of their country always call it "Nipon," just as we, in speaking of our country, call it "England," because it forms the largest division of the whole territory.

The PRESIDENT, in the name of the Society, returned thanks to Lady Franklin for these admirable maps.

COMMANDER BULLOCK, R.N., said he could bear strong testimony to the great value and correctness of the Japanese charts. Upon close examination it had been found that every town, mountain-range, valley, post-road, every river and island, and sinuosity of the coast, in every part was delineated with extreme accuracy. These charts, obtained by Sir Rutherford Alcock at the request of Captain Ward, had been the means of enabling us to anticipate the survey of these coasts by at least twenty years.

With regard to Tsusima, the Russians look upon it as a point of extreme importance: they say it is a positive necessity to have a harbour of this kind as a resort for their ships, as it lies midway between the Amur and the coast of China; and for that purpose they established a dépôt there. It is well known that our whaling-ships to the Pacific frequent a port on the north-west side of the island, where they go for wood and water and refit.

In reply to Sir Rutherford Alcock as to how the Japanese effected the surveys referred to, Captain Bullock said an endeavour was made to find that out from the six Japanese officers who accompanied the surveying expedition of Captain Ward. They repudiated all connection with the Jesuits or the Dutch, and they gave the following story; he did not vouch for the correctness of it:—A ruined merchant, somewhere in the middle of the last century, having gained some acquaintance with mathematical instruments from Europeans, thought he would undertake a survey of the islands. This occupied him a period of fifty years, at the end of which time, having presented the charts to his Government, he was restored to his former wealth and to honour. All their positions are accurately correct; their latitudes were never found more than a quarter or half a mile in error. Siebold had informed him that he had no knowledge of the existence of these charts, which had been drawn at Jeddo on three different scales. He has probably, therefore, compiled his chart of Japan, which is an exceedingly correct one, from a smaller edition of the same work, the larger ones being very rare, and said to have been almost all destroyed at the great fire at Jeddo a few years since.

It may be useful to add that Tsusima has a climate milder than that of the surrounding coasts and seas, in consequence of being situated in the Kurosiwa or Gulf-stream of Japan, which has a temperature 10° above that of the neighbouring seas. It is, however, not quite free from snow in winter.

CAPTAIN MALCOLM, R.E., said, when he was in Japan, he made the acquaintance of Colonel Von Siebold, of the Dutch Engineers, commonly known as Dr. Siebold, who showed him some original Japanese surveys of

1786, and told him that in years gone by (about 100 if his memory was correct), a Russian officer had been exploring the coast, and had instructed some of the natives in the art of surveying. There was an Astronomical Board at Jeddo, the President of which Siebold had instructed in astronomy, in taking latitudes, longitudes, &c.; and under his auspices it is believed all the good maps are published.

The PRESIDENT said as no other gentleman wished to speak on the subject of the Paper, he desired to make a communication respecting the exploration of the White Nile. Most of them had seen in the papers the report of the loss of Mr. Consul Petherick and his wife. He had only heard of the loss of this truly enterprising man from the papers. It was a melancholy subject for them to consider, and the loss was deeply to be regretted. The Council of the Society, seriously impressed with the importance of carrying out the enterprise which Mr. Petherick had in view, that of carrying up provisions to the succour of Captains Speke and Grant in the country above Gondokoro, and knowing that that most adventurous person, Mr. Baker, after exploring the tributaries of the Atbara River, was about to proceed on his travels in that direction, resolved to request him to undertake the mission that had been accepted by Mr. Petherick, in case that bold explorer should be no more, and to place at the disposal of Mr. Baker for that purpose the balance of the sum of money which remained in hand out of the subscription raised by geographers in this country to furnish Mr. Petherick with the requisite means.

While upon this subject, he begged to add that he had been informed by Mr. Tinné that the adventurous ladies, of whom mention had been made on a previous occasion as having hired a steamer at Khartûm with the intention of ascending the White Nile, had, according to the last accounts, gone for a whole day of steaming beyond Gondokoro, the station which Mr. Petherick had fixed upon to deposit provisions for the use of Speke and Grant. The names of these ladies would be made known hereafter among those of the ardent explorers of the day. They had returned to Khartûm, where they arrived on the 24th of November, and at that time Mr. Baker was about to proceed on his expedition. He had, therefore, every hope that in the end sufficient supplies might reach Speke and Grant, and that at some future meeting they might be able to report the happy termination of an expedition in which the Geographical Society took so deep an interest.

Sixth Meeting, Monday, February 9th, 1863.

SIR RODERICK I. MURCHISON, K.C.B., PRESIDENT, in the Chair.

PRESENTATIONS.—*Captains E. R. Fremantle, R.N., and C. E. Barrett-Lennard, were presented upon their election.*

ELECTIONS.—*Commander William Arthur, R.N.; Commander Charles J. Bullock, R.N.; Captain John Clayton; Captain Richard Bulkeley Pearce, R.N.; Colonel R. C. H. Taylor; Edward Armitage; William Broughall; Richard Corbet; William Eames Heathfield; James Macbraire; and W. H. Wylde, Esqrs., were elected Fellows.*

ACCESSIONS.—Among the donations to the Library and Map-rooms since the former meeting were—‘Memoirs of the Geological Survey